

# FR RECTOR'S WELCOME TO THE OC ENTREPRENEUR EVENING

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to this unique evening.

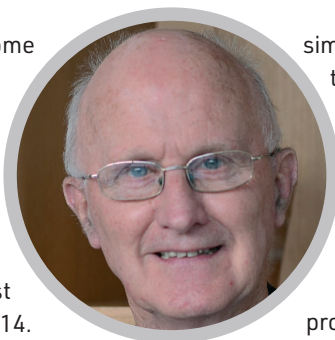
We gather to glean pearls of wisdom from a distinguished quintet of OCs who have fulfilled the hopes of Fr Kenney and his first Companions as they opened the doors of Clongowes for the first time 211 years ago, on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1814.

As Ireland awaited the promised Catholic Emancipation bill [it did not come to pass until 1829], Fr Kenney was missioned by Fr General Roothan in Rome to found a school to enable well-educated young Irish Catholics to be ready to take their place in and contribute in service to their country and the Church.

A well-known Irish Jesuit educational expert used to say that we are *springtime sowers* ..... the sowers may be well gone from the stage when the fruits of our educational apostolate reach harvest.

I think that we can safely say that the OCs, who have kindly accepted to share their experience with us this evening, bear witness to their personal harvesting of what was sowed during their time in school. In the companionship of their peers – in classrooms, study halls, Chapel, theatre, playing fields and dormitories they helped form each other to become what a recent Fr General, Pedro Arrupe, challenged all Jesuit students to become – *men-for-others* [now extended to the more embracing *men-and-women with-and-for others*.]

In recent years, since the early days of this 21<sup>st</sup> century, a great and innovative enrichment to Clongowes was sown in 2007. Inspired by the story of the Saint, Alberto Hurtado, the then Headmaster, Fr Leonard Moloney, founded the *Alberto Hurtado Programme* [AHP]. Alberto Hurtado, himself a bursary Student in the Jesuit College in Santiago, Chile, joined the Jesuits and became a prominent Apostle for the education of



similar young students and care for the needy, for whom he founded the famous *Hogar de Cristo* (*Home of Christ*). He died in 1952 and was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.

The recent crop of AHP OCs [95% of our AHP Students have progressed to higher level education] stand ready to follow the example of our Guest Speakers, who bear witness to what was sowed in them while in Clongowes. AHP Students have distinguished themselves in a great variety of fields [including a triple Colours Blue in rugby at Cambridge!] in different countries and continents.

The College can be proud of how well this evening's Speakers continue to bear fruit of what Fr Kenney started all those years ago. As we celebrate the fifth anniversary of the AHP Endowment Fund, we thank God for the enrichment our AHP Graduates have been to the soul and life of Clongowes in recent times.

A very special thanks goes to those OCs who, in a great example of *men-for-others*, have come together in their Year-group to guarantee the six-year opportunity for future AHP Students. The Year of OC'85 are celebrating their Ruby Jubilee on Saturday and, under the dynamic leadership of Declan Black are the forerunners in this great initiative. It is a wonderful witness of how they wish to express their gratitude by their desire to *give-back-and-share* something of what they themselves have received.

We pray that, inspired by our College motto – *aeterna non caduca* [living by enduring not ephemeral values] – future AHP Students will indeed take their place in our global society to serve, as Fr Kenney envisioned all of those 211 years ago – A.M.D.G. – *for the Greater Glory of God*.

Welcome again to you all this evening – and thank you for your support in so many ways.

**Fr Rector Michael Sheil S.J. OC'56**